REMARKS

The present application stands with independent claims 1 and 18 rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by the cited Bendinelli et al. (Bendinelli) reference. The remaining dependent claims have been rejected under either 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as per the previous office action, or under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). For the reasons below, the two independent claims, 1 and 18, as amended, are believed to not be anticipated by Bendinelli and thus be allowable. Accordingly, the dependent claims thereon would also be allowable.

Applicant's invention is directed to a methodology that avoids collisions and race conditions that could arise when you have a secure IPSec tunnel that traverses a NAT device. When the secure tunnel traverses a NAT that is employing a heuristic methodology, as described in the specification, collisions and race conditions could cause packets to not reach their intended destination. Applicant's methodology, as defined in claims 1 and 18, prevents such collisions and race conditions. Specifically, race conditions and collisions are eliminated or automatic recovery there from is provided by requiring a first endpoint to wait to send packets containing application data through the tunnel until it receives a response to a control packet that has been sent from the first endpoint to the second endpoint. Claims 1 and 18 have been amended to clarify what is meant by a "heuristic methodology" that is employed by the NAT in translating addresses and/or port numbers of packets transmitted between the two endpoints through the secure tunnel, as described in the specification. Thus, these claims have been amended to state that "a heuristic methodology is a methodology in which the NAT translates a private address of the first endpoint to a global address and then attempts to forward to the first endpoint packets sent by the second endpoint to the global address which global address is not uniquely associated with the first endpoint and where such attempts may fail due to collisions and/or race conditions".

In Bendinelli, in order to establish communications between two endpoint hosts, each endpoint host first communicates through a Network Operational

Center (NOC) for purposes of granting consent to communicate with the other endpoint host and to resolve virtual addressing issues. Once these issues have been resolved, a secure tunnel is established directly between the two endpoint hosts. The mere mention in paragraph 0141 in Bendinelli that "this virtual addressing may facilitate network address translation, port address translation, IP masquerade, ..." in no way teaches how network address translation that employs a heuristic methodology as that term is defined can be used, where it would be used, and how it could be used so as to avoid or automatically recover from collisions and race conditions that can occur when an IPSec tunnel traverses a network address translator. Accordingly, claims 1 and 18 are not anticipated by Benindelli and are therefore allowable. Further, the dependent claims thereon should also be allowable and further discussion of the rejections of these claims is unnecessary.

In view of the foregoing, allowance of all the claims presently in the application and passage to issue of the subject application is respectfully requested. If the Examiner should feel that the application is not yet in a condition for allowance and that a telephone interview would be useful, he is invited to contact applicants' undersigned attorney at 973, 386-8252.

Respectfully submitted,

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